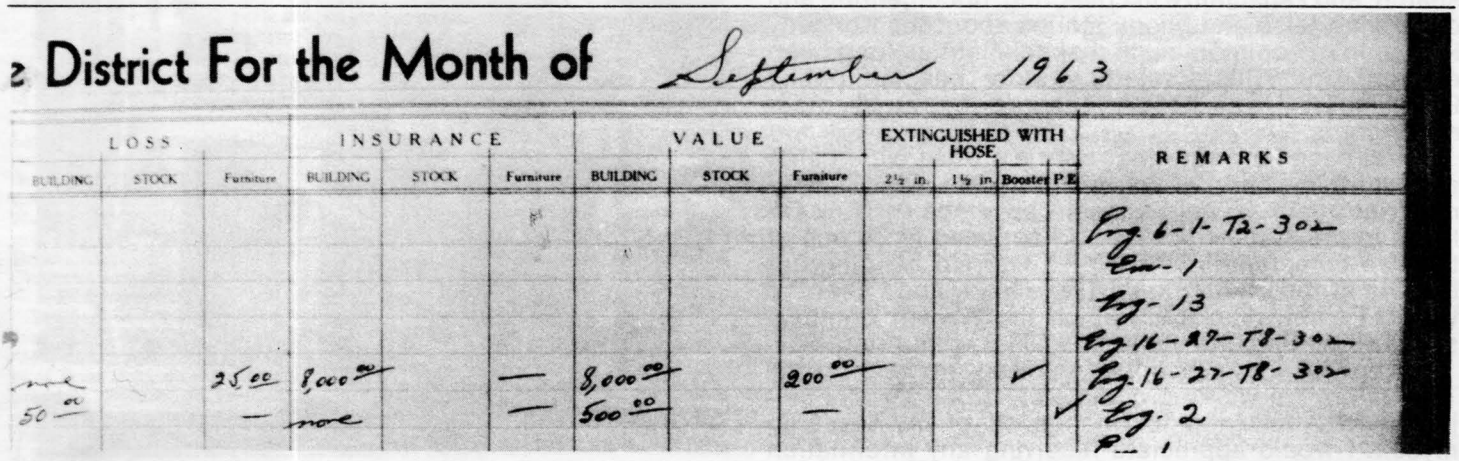
COVERUPS!

Number 26 | Gary Mack, Editor and Publisher | June 1986



District For the Month of September 1963

LOSS			INSURANCE			VALUE			EXTINGUISHED WITH HOSE				REMARKS
BUILDING	STOCK	Furniture	BUILDING	STOCK	Furniture	BUILDING	STOCK	Furniture	2½ in.	1½ in.	Booster	P.E.	
													Eng. 6-1-T2-30
													Eng-1
													Eng-13
													Eng 16-27-T8-30
more		25.00	8,000.00		—	8,000.00		200.00			✓		Eng 16-27-T8-30
50.00		—	more		—	500.00		—				✓	Eng. 2
													F.— 1

The original New Orleans Fire Department log book showing the "diversionary fire" report second from bottom. All entries to the right of "Building" in the "Loss" column were deleted from Henry Hurt's Reasonable Doubt.

REPORTER CALLS EASTERLING STORY A HOAX

by Gary Mack

An incredible confession to involvement in the Kennedy assassination, by a key character in Henry Hurt's book Reasonable Doubt, is a hoax, according to a reporter in the man's home town.

Johann Rush, a reporter/photographer for Laurel-Hattiesburg, Mississippi NBC affiliate WDAM-TV, talked often with Robert "Cowboy Bob" Easterling during the same period he was being interviewed by Hurt. In Rush's opinion, and that of other Easterling acquaintances, the admitted conspirator has been telling an unbelievable story:

April 23, 1986

Dear Gary,

You asked me to write an article for your newsletter concerning the alleged confession of Mr. Robert Easterling from my home town of Hattiesburg, Mississippi. You may publish this letter as the article.

As I told you on the phone, I talked to Mr. Easterling extensively in 1981, '82, and '83. He called me frequently, trying to get me to help him sell his "confession" to NBC News and to the National Enquirer. Because of certain outrageous stories Mr. Easterling told, I realized during our first conversation that his "confession" was a hoax. He seemed uninterested in telling his story on my TV station, but he often said that he and I could "make a lot of money" if I would just help him sell his "confession" to some TV network or newspaper.

I listened to his "confession" a number of times, and I found too many conflicts and errors in his story to take any of it seriously. For example, Mr. Easterling told me that several Cubans he was involved with in New Orleans took a large wooden box containing a one-of-a-kind, left-handed, automatic rifle to the Texas School Book Depository in Dallas—in May of 1963—in preparation for the assassination of President Kennedy in November.

He said that a Cuban named Manuel "Rivera" and Lee Harvey Oswald supervised the manufacture of this rifle in Czechoslovakia a couple of years earlier. He said it had to be "left handed" so that the assassin could shoot the President from a window on the south side of the Book Depository. If this were true, "Rivera" and Oswald would have had to have known that the president would be riding in front of the Book Depository two to three years *after* the manufacture of the rifle. I never understood why the automatic rifle had to be "left-handed."

Mr. Easterling said that J. Edgar Hoover, former Director of the FBI, called to warn him to remove himself from the "conspiracy" because the Cubans he was associated with were going to kill him after the assassination. He also said that Mr. Hoover visited him once in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Mr. Easterling also said he believed that the Cuban who killed Kennedy escaped the Book Depository by climbing out a rear window on a rope ladder. He said that a negro man was "pissing" out of a nearby window at the time. Mr. Easterling said that Secret Service agents observed this act and would have seen the Cuban "rolling up the ladder" had they looked out the window.

Needless to say, I did not feel that I wanted any part of the selling or retelling of Mr. Easterling's story. Generally, I find Mr. Easterling to be a rather charming and interesting old fellow. He is smaller and much less frightening looking in person than he seems in his published photos. He appears to be quite lucid and coherent as he relates his rather strange story.

I know of nearly two dozen other people who have heard Mr. Easterling's story—in person or over the phone—including others at my TV station and local law enforcement personnel, and I know of no one who actually believes Mr. Easterling's tale. Local Sheriff Gene Walters has been hearing various Easterling "confessions" for many years.

Contrary to a story that Mr. Easterling never demanded payment for publication rights to his story, when I

asked him in January 1983 about his contact with the Reader's Digest, he told me "They call me every other day, and they say that their legal department is drawing up my agreement. I want $25,000 and 3 per cent of the sale of their book, and I want to negotiate my own deal with NBC."

Mr. Easterling is currently in the Mississippi state mental hospital. He was placed there by his relatives in 1983.

As you know, I'm a newcomer to assassination research, and I specialize in collecting, documenting and disproving false and phony stories about the Kennedy killing. In my opinion, such a specialist has long been needed. Until this Easterling story became public knowledge, I was totally ignored by most other researchers.

I first became aware that untrue stories were being published by certain Warren "critics" when I read material about Oswald's media coverage in New Orleans in the summer of 1963. I happened to be one of the two cameramen who filmed Oswald handing out leaflets at the International Trade Mart, and I shot the WDSU-TV newsfilm from which the Warren Commission's Pizzo Exhibits 453-A and 453-B were printed.

Except for the occasional reports I produce for my TV station, I'm working completely alone on this project, and I'm having to finance all of my research myself. I would appreciate receiving any information and documents from other researchers who are disturbed by the publication of apparently false information. I don't collect mistakes; I collect lies, like the whoppers told by Mr. Easterling, and I don't care if the lies originated with government agencies or with individuals.

Sincerely,

Johann Rush

P.O.Box 563
Hattiesburg, MS 39403

Late in May, Rush traveled to New Orleans and examined the original fire department log book Hurt used to corroborate Easterling's bizarre tale of having picked up Lee Harvey Oswald. That ledger actually proves the "diversionary fire" did no damage to the building and less than $25 damage to an unidentified piece of furniture.

Furthermore, the standard four units responded to the unknown-fire alarm: two pumpers, a hook-and-ladder, and the supervisor's car. One booster hose was hooked up to a pumper. Firefighters encountered what seems to have been only a smouldering piece of furniture—it was pulled outside and doused with water.

The complete absence of damage to the building, as noted in the "Loss" column, is most significant. It means there were no flames, very little smoke, and no water was used *in the building.*

Based on the full report, available to Henry Hurt but withheld from his readers, there was no real "diversionary fire," no hoses were stretched across the street, and there was no mass confusion as implied in Easterling's story.

In a followup phone call after returning to Hattiesburg, Rush located a firefighter who rode one of those two pumpers throughout 1963. He is now a captain with the New Orleans Fire Department and cannot be quoted by name without clearance from the public relations department (a formality he would observe, if necessary.)

2011 Melpomene, scene of the "diversionary fire," on May 31, 1986.

The captain does not remember the fire, but he did explain the ledger notations. In the "Remarks" column, engines 16 and 27 were pumpers and both carried enough water to fight very small fires. T8 was a hook-and-ladder unit routinely included when the size of a fire was unknown, while 302 was the supervisor's car.

The Booster hose was the smallest hose the fire trucks carried, and it hooked up directly to the pumper. Just ¾ inch in diameter, it was 1/8 inch larger than a standard garden hose. The big hoses, 1½ and 2½ inches in diameter, would ordinarily be connected to a fire hydrant; however, the ledger indicates clearly that those hoses were *not* used.

In 1963 the captain was assigned to Engine 16 which, surprisingly, is still in service and can be inspected by anyone at it's regular location: the new (1970) fire station across the street from the scene of the so-called "diversionary fire" at 2011 Melpomene.

Meanwhile, Rush continues digging into other questionable aspects of Easterling's story, and is looking for evidence Hurt may have knowingly written false or misleading statements.

[Note: Johann Rush is not without controversy either. On November 22, 1981 he angered researchers in Dealey Plaza with his opinions. Many of us were highly suspicious of him, and inquiries at that time did not soften our feelings. But when a mutual acquaintance, at my request, contacted him about Easterling over two months ago, we learned Rush already had accumulated strong proof that Easterling's story is false. Based on the evidence Rush has supplied (some of which is presented above), this researcher is comfortable with the work he is doing; any who disagree may respond.]

SHELLS AT THE SCENE: AUTOMATICS OR SPECIALS?

by Dale K. Myers

Sergeant Gerald L. Hill cruised slowly down 10th Street. The three letters kept playing back in his head. DOA. DOA.[1]

The news that patrolman J. D. Tippit was dead on arrival at Methodist Hospital wasn't surprising. The witnesses at the scene had hinted earlier that Tippit was in bad shape when they found him. It was just that Hill had hoped they were wrong.

The assault with a deadly weapon charge would now be simply: murder. Yet the police still needed to capture the suspected killer.

It had been nearly twenty minutes since Tippit was gunned down on the quiet residential street in Oak Cliff and Hill knew the trail was growing cold.

Hill swung patrol car number 96 behind Tippit's squad car and pulled to the curb.[2]

"Here's your keys," Hill said as he flipped them to patrolman J. M. Poe standing near the curb. Poe had given the keys to Hill ten minutes earlier when Hill needed a squad car to search for the fleeing suspect.[3]

"Any luck?" Poe asked.

"Nope. They're gettin' set to shake down a church, but I don't know," Hill managed to mumble. "He's probably long gone."

Poe fingered his shotgun and watched as Willie Barnes from the Crime Lab prepared to take photographs of the scene.[4]

"Well, I better hoof it back there," Hill said gesturing toward the church with his thumb, "see if they need a hand."

Hill turned and started up the street when Poe suddenly remembered.

"Sergeant?"

Hill spun around as Poe reached into his pocket and pulled out an empty Winston cigarette pack. Empty, except for two chrome-looking spent shells. Poe squeezed the pack open and showed Hill what was inside.[5]

"A witness found them," Poe explained. "The suspect threw them into those bushes."

Hill looked over at the shrubs Poe was pointing to.

"Well, you hang onto them," Hill instructed. "Let's not complicate the chain of evidence. Turn them over to someone in the Crime Lab."[6]

"Yes, sir," agreed Poe.

The patrolman turned and strolled toward Barnes, who was fidgeting with a camera lens.

Hill scratched his face. With Tippit's killer still on the loose, it would be important for the other officers to know what they're up against.

Hill walked to the curb and reached inside Poe's patrol car for the radio microphone.

"550, car two."

"Go ahead, car two," replied the police dispatcher.

Hill punched the button again.

"The shells at the scene indicate that the suspect is armed with an automatic .38 rather than a pistol."[7]

"10-4," acknowledged the dispatcher.

Done, thought Hill. The police had already flushed out one wrong suspect at the library. Now, they would be able to easily identify the correct man. He would have an automatic.

Five months later, Warren Commission Counsel David Belin asked Hill about that radio transmission. Hill denied making the call that identified the shells at the scene as "automatics" and the incident was quietly forgotten.[8]

No doubt, the question of whether Hill had made the broadcast concerning the shells bothered Belin, since Belin knew that Hill was the officer who took possession of Lee Harvey Oswald's revolver following Oswald's arrest. A revolver that contained .38 Specials, *not* automatics.[9]

Contrary to Hill's testimony, a voice comparison conducted by this researcher shows that Gerald Hill *was* the officer who made all of the radio transmissions attributed to "550, car two" *including* the broadcast concerning the spent shells.[10]

14. FRONT OF TIPPIT SQUAD CAR AT KILLING SITE.
BARNES EXHIBIT B

In addition, a careful analysis of the movements of police officers in the vicinity of the Tippit shooting shows that Gerald Hill was at 10th and Patton, from where the radio call originated, at precisely the moment of the transmission.[11]

Many of those delving into the Tippit shooting have wondered how a police officer with Hill's experience could have identified the shells, which the Warren Commission said were Oswald's .38 Specials, as automatics.

The credibility gap grows wider when considering the following information developed by this researcher.

TOM CHEEK

Researcher Dale Myers demonstrating the size differences between .38 Special and .38 automatic shells.

There are three identifying characteristics that separate .38 Special and .38 automatic shells.

First, and most obvious, both types are stamped accordingly on the base of the shell. The Special contains a mark identifying the manufacturer (i.e., W.W. for Winchester-Western) as well as the marking ".38 SPL" for .38 Special. Similarly, the automatic is stamped with a manufacturer's identification and the marking ".38 AUTO" for .38 automatic.

Second, unlike the Specials, the automatic shells have a tapered and grooved base to allow easy ejection.

Third, the automatic shells are about ¼ inch shorter than the .38 Specials.

Any *one* of these distinguishing characteristics could be used to correctly identify shells found at the scene of a crime.

How could Hill have *incorrectly* identified the shells, as alleged by the Warren Commission?

It would seem that the *only* way Hill could have made a mistake is if he *never looked at the shells.* Perhaps Hill may have *assumed* the shells were automatics simply because they were left at the scene.

Yet Hill's own testimony refutes any such contention.

Hill told the Warren Commission that Poe showed him the shells and told him that "a citizen had pointed out to him where the suspect had reloaded his gun and dropped these in the grass."[12]

The location where the shells were recovered, as pointed out to Hill, was several yards from the place where the killer stood pumping bullets into Tippit's body. This would seem more indicative of a non-automatic weapon.

Therefore, Hill could not have *assumed* that the shells were automatics since the ejection system would have deposited the shells near the place the gunman stood while firing.

Hill's identification that the shells were automatics, if not based on an assumption, *must* have been the result of identifying one or more of the three distinguishing characteristics noted earlier.

It would appear that despite Hill's testimony and the Warren Commission's conclusions, the shells recovered at the Tippit shooting scene were automatics.

[1] Hill testimony, 7H48
[2] CE529, Barnes Exhibit B
[3] Hill testimony, 7H48
[4] Barnes Exhibit B
[5] Hill testimony, 7H48-49
[6] Hill testimony, 7H49
[7] Dallas Police Tapes, CE1974, p. 78
[8] Hill testimony, 7H57-58
[9] Hill testimony, 7H54
[10] Hill voice comparison
[11] Hill testimony, 7H48; CE1974, p. 78
[12] Hill testimony, 7H48

DMN 6-21-86

Cable drama to argue whether Oswald guilty

By Ed Bark
Television Critic of The News

LOS ANGELES — **Lee Harvey Oswald**, murdered before he could be tried on charges that he assassinated President Kennedy, will be prosecuted and defended by two famed attorneys in yet another television special inspired by that dark day in Dallas.

The Showtime cable network's *The Trial of Lee Harvey Oswald*, a two-part, four-hour courtroom drama, is set to premiere Nov. 22, a Showtime representative told *The News*. Taping is scheduled to start July 20 in London, with attorneys **Vincent Bugliosi** and **Jerry Spence** squaring off. Some exterior footage will be shot in Dallas, probably in September.

Bugliosi, who prosecuted the Manson family and wrote *Helter Skelter*, a best seller based on the trial, will try to prove that Oswald assassinated Kennedy. Spence, whose clients include the late **Karen Silkwood**, will defend Oswald.

November 22, 1986, will be the 23rd anniversary of the assassination.

(Pro-conspiracy witnesses Phil Willis and Jean Hill had agreed to appear, but were abruptly cancelled, reportedly by Spence. Has a verdict already been determined?)

Summmary of LAPD investigation into Rob

Excerpts from

Following are excerpts from the Los Angeles Police Department's investigation into the assassination of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy on June 5, 1968, at the Los Angeles Ambassador Hotel:

Introduction

On June 5, 1968, at 12:15 a.m., United States Senator Robert F. Kennedy was mortally wounded at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, California. His assailant, a young Jordanian immigrant named Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, waited in a serving pantry of the hotel as the senator concluded an election night victory speech in a nearby ballroom. . . To grasp the scope of this (investigation—), one needs to take a brief look at the setting, the individuals involved and the historical significance of the incident.

The shooting occurred against a backdrop of election night activities featuring supporters of presidential candidate Kennedy and the winners in the primary election for United States senator, Democrat Alan Cranston and Republican Max Rafferty. At midnight Senator Kenedy made a victory speech to an overflow crowd of about two thousand enthusiastic celebrants and newsmen in the Embassy Room. At the end of his speech he left the stage and, surrounded by staff workers and well-wishers, was led into the serving pantry en route to the temporary press headquarters in the nearby Colonial Room. As the mass of people were proceeding through the corridor-like pantry Sirhan fired several shots at pointblank range into Senator Kennedy, fatally wounding him in the head and additionally in the right armpit.

Those nearest the suspect immediately grappled with him as he continued to fire. Five additional persons were wounded by the fusillade of bullets. Instantly, the scene degenerated into one of pandemonium and mob hysteria. The hysteria quickly spread as news of the shooting reached Kennedy workers and supporters still massed in the adjoining ballroom. Police response was quick and shortly involved in excess of four hundred officers.

The ramifications of Sirhan's act so profoundly affected the political atmosphere in the United States that a thorough assessment of its significance can probably not yet be made. Moreover, the international consequences of Kennedy's death, seen as a political assassination in most parts of the world, could not be ignored. His death followed the recent assassination of civil rights leader Martin Luther King and the murder of President John F. Kennedy. The massive task confronting this department must be viewed in this light. . . .It was obvious that history would look upon the results of our investigation to ascertain if we had exhausted all possible means to uncover the complete truth about the event.

Senator Kennedy

(Los Angeles Police) Department personnel became involved with Kennedy campaign activities during a motorcade in downtown Los Angeles on May 29, 1968. On May 28th, the Department received a telegram from a Kennedy aide advising that a motorcade was planned for the next day. No request for security was made to this department. The incidents which occurred at that motorcade illustrate the Kennedy party's attitude toward the police.

Officers of this department were assigned to observe the course of the motorcade and to insure the even flow of traffic along the motorcade route. Several violations were observed during the motorcade as civilian motorcycle officers blocked intersections and allowed vehicles in the motorcade to drive through against red signal lights.

At one point in the motorcade, at 9th and Santee Streets, the vehicles came to a stop and Senator Kennedy was pulled from his vehicle by a large enthusiastic crowd. A Traffic Enforcement Division sergeant attempted to assist the senator back to his vehicle when it appeared to him that Kennedy needed help. Kennedy and his aides berated the sergeant and told him that they had not asked for the assistance of the police. Several other incidents occurred along the route of the motorcade involving this department's officers and Kennedy aides. At one point, (deleted) shouted obscenities at several officers who were attempting to keep the crowd from becoming unmanageable and spilling onto the street. These remarks were highly inflammatory and the officers considered making and arrest (deleted) disturbing the peace.

The identification of several persons in the motorcade was obtained for the purpose of making applications for complaints for various criminal and vehicle code violations. The applications were withdrawn in the interest of justice after the assassination.

Personal Security

William Barry, an ex-FBI agent, acted as sole security for Senator Kennedy. His primary assignment was to act as personal bodyguard for Kennedy and he was responsible for liaison with local law enforcment agencies. Barry did not contact the department to request security for the senator for June 2-4, 1968.

After the assassination, Barry advised investigators that he had been concerned about Senator Kennedy's security. He had observed security problems at other events and had intended to speak to Kennedy on their return to New York. Barry told investigators that Kennedy was very difficult to protect because of his desire to allow supporters to be close to him.

Plans for Senator Kennedy's movements prior to the election night were made by Barry, Dutton and Richard Tuck, another Kennedy aide. Rafer Johnson had joined the Kennedy staff a few weeks prior to the assassination to assist in crowd control. Dutton advised investigators that police were not used for Kennedy's personal security except when they anticipated an unruly crowd. Dutton and Tuck arranged appointments for Kennedy, and Barry and Johnson provided the sole physical security for him.

Kennedy arrival

On the afternoon of June 2, 1968,

ert Kennedy's assassination

police probe of RFK killing

Senator Robert Francis Kennedy, his wife and four of their children arrived at Orange County Airport to begin the final two days of his campaign to win the California Democratic Party presidential electors being selected in the June 4th primary election.

In the course of those two days he addressed a festival in Orange County, visited Disneyland, traveled to San Francisco for a rally, returned to Long Beach for a speech and a motorcade to Venice, fled (sic) to San Diego for an appearance, spent the day of the election at the home of a friend in Malibu. At 8 p.m., on June 4th, he was driven to the Ambassador Hotel to await the election returns and his anticipated victory. . .

Sirhan activities

Several witnesses came forward who had seen and spoken to Sirhan the night of June 4, 1968. From their statements, investigators were able to closely establish the whereabouts of Sirhan from 6 p.m. until the time of the shooting. A similar chronology was made, based on statements of witnesses, for the period of June 2-4, 1968.

On June 4, at 6:10 p.m., Sirhan had coffee with an ex-school friend at Bob's Big Boy restaurant in Pasadena. He and the friend went to the Pasadena City College cafeteria and met three other men whom they both knew. Sirhan discussed various innocuous subjects with them and left at approximately 7:15 p.m. The witnesses reported that Sirhan appeared normal and very friendly.

Sirhan was next seen by an electrician at the Ambassador Hotel at approximately 8:45 p.m. He and Sirhan conversed generally and Sirhan asked him if he had ever seen Kennedy. Sirhan was holding a glass with a milky-looking liquid and he was very talkative. The electrician reported seeing Sirhan speak to a fireman; however, investigators could not determine his identity.

Between 9 p.m. and 9:30 p.m., Sirhan spoke to two young Mexican men in the Palm Court Room of the hotel. Sirhan allegedly spoke critically of Kennedy and described him as not caring about the poor people but, rather, that he sought to gain the presidency for personal reasons. Sirhan related that he had just spent $20 for a drink at the Rafferty headquarters to show off to a hostess who had "looked down at him"

Sometime after 9:30 p.m., a Western Union operator saw Sirhan near her teletype machine in the Colonial Room. After the shooting, the operator saw the police taking Sirhan from the hotel. She believed that Sirhan recognized her as he was taken from the hotel. A hotel waiter also reported seeing Sirhan later, around 10 p.m., in the Palm Court room.

Judy Royer, a Kennedy staff worker, reported asking Sirhan to leave the pantry area twice during the evening prior to the shooting. Robert Klase, a Kennedy supporter, was standing in the anteroom to the kitchen at about 11 p.m., when Sirhan attempted to enter a nearby door; he tapped Sirhan on the shoulder and asked him to leave. Sirhan turned back into the Embassy Room.

Klase and Royer walked through the pantry area just prior to the shooting and did not see Sirhan. Sometime later Jesus Perez, a kitchen helper, was standing in the pantry as Kennedy was finishing his speech. Perez noticed that Sirhan was standing in the pantry. Sirhan asked the assembled employees several times if Kennedy would be coming through the pantry. They responded that they did not know. Perez recalled that Sirhan was twisting or folding some papers in his hands and that he appeared nervous.

The Victory Speech

Jesse Unruh, (then) speaker of the California Assembly, spoke to the enthusiastic crowd. His legislative assistant, Jack Crose, had gone to Senator Kennedy's fifth floor suite to ask the Senator to come down to the ballroom. . .

The small group accompanying Kennedy took a service elevator to the kitchen area at Kenendy's request so that they could avoid the crowd in the lobby of the hotel. They then walked through the employee's lunch area and Kennedy stopped to shake hands with numerous people and he autographed a poster for an admirer. Kennedy entered the Embassy Ballroom through an honor guard of Kennedy Girls, and (walked) onto the stage. The time was 12:02 a.m.

The stage area was packed as Kennedy delivered a victory message to an audience of about 1,500 persons in the crowded auditorium. Lights from the news cameras heated the already hot room. As Kennedy finished his speech one of his aides said, "This way, senator," and a small group including Kennedy walked to the rear of the stage and through the door to an anteroom. The decision to go through the anteroom and serving pantry area was made moments before by Fred Dutton and William Barry. Both men attempted to catch up with Kennedy as he moved quickly toward the Colonial Room where the "writing press" was awaiting his arrival. Mrs. Kennedy remarked to Barry as they walked away from the stage, "stay with the Senator."

A large crowd of people surged around Kennedy as he made his way toward the pantry area. Several persons noted that Kennedy was walking "quite fast." Kennedy stopped for a brief moment to shake hands with the kitchen help. Karl Uecker, a hotel waiter captain, was with Kennedy as he walked from the stage to the pantry and took his arm to assist him toward the Colonial Room.

Vincent DiPierro, a college student and son of the hotel maitre d', was walking to the right of Kennedy and about five feet behind him. He observed a man standing on a tray rack at the east end of the ice machine. He recalled that the man had an unusual smile on his face and appeared to be bending over, holding his right hand against his stomach. DiPierro looked away and turned toward Kennedy.

The Shooting

Kennedy stopped to shake hands with a hotel waiter and then with DiPierro. As he let go of the hand of Jesus Perez, another hotel employee, a man moved toward Kennedy; his right arm fully extended, he fired four shots quickly at the senator. Kennedy raised his arms over his head and two of the shots entered under his right arm. The first shot had struck him in the head behind the right ear; the second went through the padding of Kennedy's coat and struck Paul Schrade, a United Automobile Workers Union official, in the head.

Witnesses' recollections of the shooting varied. One thought the man was going to shake hands with the senator. Another saw the man raise a pistol and saw an "angry and determined" look in his face. One witness saw the man push the gun toward the back of Kennedy's head but could not identify the suspect because of the chaos that followed. A 13-year-old Kennedy worker saw the man holding the gun and then he saw a flame come from it.

Uecker immediately grabbed the man as he fired the first shots. He continued firing at Kennedy and one witness recalled that "he had a tremendous look of concentration on his face." He fired eight shots; the last four while the confused crowd tried to apprehend him. Five others were wounded in the shooting.

Many witnesses thought that they heard balloons popping and others thought the sounds were firecrackers. The accounts of the distance from the suspect and Kennedy varied. A hotel busboy thought the gun was three feet from Kennedy's head. Another witness thought the first shot came from point blank range. Subsequent laboratory examination placed the distance of the first and fatal shot at one inch.

The Capture

Karl Uecker swung around as Kennedy fell to the floor. Uecker seized the man by the neck and struck at his hand to push the gun away from the crowd; while several others close by reached out to control him. The man was wrestled to a nearby metal table and the gun fell from his hand for a moment. He was able to regain possession of the gun.

Roosevelt Grier, an ex-professional football player, approached the struggling group. He wrestled the gun from the man's hand and gave it to Rafer Johnson who was standing nearby. The men holding the man then pinned him to the serving table and held him there until the police arrived. During the struggle the suspect received injuries to his ankle and right hand. These were later treated at Homicide Division.

William Barry, who was several feet behind Kennedy when the shots were fired, told investigators that when he reached the suspect no one was holding him. He stated that he took the gun from him and struck him twice in the face with his fist. He said that the suspect later retrieved the gun and others in the crowd assisted him in controlling the suspect. The investigation disclosed, however, that by the time Barry reached the suspect several others had hold of him.

(Kennedy was first taken to Los Angeles City Receiving Hospital and later transferred to Good Samaritan hospital, where he was pronounced dead at 1:44 a.m. June 6.)

Conclusions

A consideration of the facts determined by the investigation and evaluation of all witness's testimony and available evidence sustain certain conclusions:

1. Sirhan Sirhan fired the fatal shots that killed Senator Robert F. Kennedy and wounded five others. (This was established beyond any doubt by eyewitnesses and physical evidence).

2. Sirhan fired these shots with the intent to kill Senator Kennedy and his act was premeditated. (All evidence indicated that Sirhan took the necessary steps to prepare himself for the assassination and to put himself in a position to kill Kennedy).

3. Sirhan was not under the influence of a drug or intoxicant at the time of the shooting. (Of the many police and lay witnesses in close contact with Sirhan (in) the minutes immediately following the shooting, not one observed any objective symptom of intoxication. Experienced officers found his pupil reaction to be normal and his mental condition alert and responsive.)

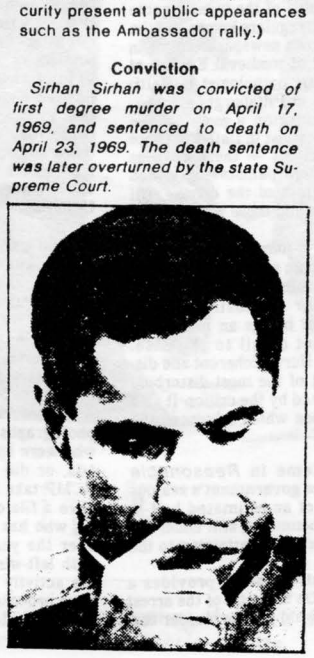
4. Sirhan was legally sane at the time of the incident. (This conclusion is established by available psychiatric evaluation reports. The issue of his sanity has not been raised by the defense.)

5. There was no evidence of a conspiracy in the crime. (A complete chapter of the report deals with this subject and makes conclusive statements regarding each specific allegation).

6. The Kennedy Staff did not request any police protection from the Los Angeles Police Department nor was any offered by the department. (The investigation revealed that his personal security was provided by a bodyguard and his various aides who functioned in crowd handling situations. Staff members confirmed that the senator did not desire police security present at public appearances such as the Ambassador rally.)

Conviction

Sirhan Sirhan was convicted of first degree murder on April 17, 1969, and sentenced to death on April 23, 1969. The death sentence was later overturned by the state Supreme Court.



Montreal Gazette 4-19-86

JFK

A distinguished American journalist has joined the unofficial sleuths tracking the killers and those who covered up, from Montreal to Mexico City and back again

REASONABLE DOUBT
An Investigation
Into the Assassination
of John F. Kennedy
By Henry Hurt
Holt, Rinehart and Winston
555 pp, $27.95

By BRIAN McKENNA
Special to The Gazette

How refreshing it is to read a good American reporter taking on the crime of the century. For most journalists, investigating the John F. Kennedy assassination has always been akin to chasing flying-saucer stories. A strange taboo surrounds the murder of the U.S. president in Dallas at 12:30 p.m. EST on Nov. 22, 1963.

Even three years ago, amid the epiphany of the anniversary of his death, scant attention was paid to the crime itself. The media celebrated his presidency, gossipped about his lascivious private life, shivered at the dimensions of the Kennedy family tragedy and wept for innocence lost that day under the Texas sun. There was more analysis of the cadence of his language than of who killed him and why.

Yet here stands a crime more momentous than the assassination of Caesar, a political event darker than the murder of Lincoln. Forty-one years after the Second World War, a special unit of the U.S. justice department stalks Nazi war criminals. The killing of the 35th president, which four out of five Americans believe resulted from a conspiracy, lies unpursued by that same arm of authority.

This remains so even after the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA) declared in 1978 that sufficient evidence of a conspiracy existed for the FBI and justice department to pick up the trail.

The murder was not in our house, so it's been easier for a a handful of Canadian, British and European journalists to tackle the story. In the United States, the press shirked its job. The slow crumbling of the official verdict on the assassination has come only as a result of the indefatigable work of a band of irregulars known as "the critics." A small-town newspaper editor in Texas, a professor of medieval English at Berkeley, a forensic pathologist in Baltimore, an engineer in Pittsburgh, a corporate lawyer in Washington, a goose farmer in Maryland, an archivist in Dallas, a photo analyst in Connecticut — these citizens and others like them painstakingly inch through the labyrinth of the crime, still tracking the killers and those who covered for them.

Now the search is joined by a Virginian named Henry Hurt, an experienced reporter with the establishment credentials of a former Rockefeller Foundation fellow. *Reasonable Doubt* brings an intelligent eye for significant detail to the case. What's best in it is Hurt's coherent and dispassionate account of the most disturbing evidence documented by the critics. It also offers new evidence which advances the story.

A major theme in *Reasonable Doubt* is the government's zealous protection of an estimated half-a-million pages of documents, still under the seal of national security, pertaining to the assassination.

A curious Montreal story provides a good illustration. On the heels of the arrest of Lee Harvey Oswald for the murder that Friday afternoon, a U.S. Customs intelligence agent based in Montreal informed the Secret Service that Oswald had been here three months before, in August 1963, handing out pro-Castro handbills. Toppling Castro was a Kennedy administration priority and agent Jean Paul Tremblay was one of thousands around the world assigned to the Cuban dossier.

In his report, Tremblay noted that Oswald was in the company of two men and a woman. Pretending to be a passerby, Tremblay accepted a handbill from Oswald published by the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, a leftist organization on whose behalf Oswald made a lot of noise. Many critics now believe Oswald during that period was being set up as a left-wing patsy to pin the assassination on Castro.

The Tremblay report from the Montreal field office was dispatched to J. Edgar Hoover's FBI. But the bureau placed the enigmatic former marine in New Orleans in August, so the FBI dismissed Tremblay's report as an error. But there is a troubling sequel to this story which says much about the whole botched Kennedy investigation and what the critics charge is a continuing coverup.

The author discovered surveillance photographs were snapped of the handbill incident. The FBI refuses to release them. "If the photographs show a man clearly *not* Oswald," writes the author, "they would support the FBI version. On the other hand, a picture of the real Oswald — or a man who looked very much like him — in company with pro-Castro activists would raise the sort of question the government has sought to quash." If an impostor was running around pretending to be a left-wing nut named Oswald, then evidence of a conspiracy mounts. Indeed, Hoover harbored suspicions about the Oswald identity three years before Kennedy's murder. In 1960, when Oswald lived in the Soviet Union as a "defector," the FBI director warned that at home "there is a possibility that an impostor is using Oswald's birth certificate."

JOHN F. KENNEDY
Momentous crime

Sightings of someone posing as Oswald grew as the assassination closed in. In Mexico City, an Oswald impostor staged a scene at the Cuban embassy. A frame from a CIA surveillance film shows it was clearly not Oswald. Is it the same man photographed in Montreal?

(And were the Montreal surveillance photographs snapped by U.S. authorities who were operating out of bounds in Canada, or did the Security Service of the RCMP take the pictures? Does the RCMP have a file on Lee Harvey Oswald, and if so, who has seen it? Certainly the force over the years has been as preoccupied with left-wing bogeymen as the FBI, and the activity of a pro-Castro group would have provoked considerable interest.)

Hurt is eloquent on the political angles that make the JFK case more than a street crime to be solved by the Dallas police.

Kennedy had many powerful enemies with motive, means and opportunity. By 1963, most of the oil industry hated him for threatening the lucrative oil depletion-allowance tax loophole. Teamster president James Hoffa and the Mafia loathed the Kennedy brothers for their relentless war on organized crime. Anti-Castro Cubans despised JFK for supposedly going soft on Castro. Many in the military and intelligence community vilified Kennedy's test ban treaty with the Soviets and his apparent intention to pull out of Vietnam after the 1964 election.

"So many people wanted John Kennedy dead in the autumn of 1963," anti-Castro mercenary Gerry Patrick Hemmings told the CBC's *Fifth Estate*, "that we'll never know which contract took him out."

Following the murder, there was a fundamental shift in policy. The Texan in the White House wound down the war on organized crime and plunged the U.S. into the fiery pit of Vietnam. Lyndon Johnson was a smoldering and bitter man from the moment he lost the 1960 Democratic nomination to Kennedy, and many were astonished at his eager grasp of the vice-presidency. Indeed, his sudden and startling departure from power in 1968 has always had its mysterious aspects.

As he lay dying, Jack Ruby, the Mafia thug who silenced Oswald, wrote letters to a wealthy Texas friend that Johnson was at the core of the conspiracy. As we see from the Robert Caro biography of LBJ, Johnson was a ruthless man who never forgot his backers. To observe that LBJ benefited more than any other politician from the death of Kennedy does not make him part of a conspiracy. But why should the American republic be immune from the kind of searing and bloody transfer of power that characterizes the murder conspiracies from history which Shakespeare forged into drama?

It is remarkable that Hurt even got his manuscript published. The project began as a *Reader's Digest* book, richly financed by that conservative institution when it appeared Hurt might be able to prove Kennedy was killed by a communist plot.

Hurt started his book by chasing this story: sequestered in a secret compartment in the assassin's lair, the real rifle used to blow apart Kennedy's head was supplied by the Soviet surrogate Czechoslovaks as part of a Castro conspiracy to fell Kennedy before any of the Kennedy administration's murder attempts succeeded against Castro.

The author's main witness to this hypothesis became a small-time felon named Robert Easterling. Hurt declares that Easterling is the only man to confess to even a bit part in a conspiracy to murder Kennedy. In more than 100 hours of interviews, Easterling convinced Hurt he was partially telling the truth as he confessed to a plot with eerie echoes. Many of the player, such as the organized-crime catspaw David Ferrie, are familiar to those who followed the discredited investigation launched by New Orleans district attorney Jim Garrison in 1967.

Easterling supplied tantalizing clues which Hurt painstakingly cross-checked, but these clues came amid a torrent of ludicrous babble. The author is the first to admit his prime witness is "a raging alcoholic, a diagnosed psychotic and schizophrenic" — but he also argues there is enough evidence for the FBI to conduct a serious investigation, something the agency has refused to do.

One suspects the author of *Reasonable Doubt* spent many nightmarish days tracking down Easterling's droppings at the expense of more fertile trails, but the book is redeemed by Hurt's findings in other important areas. (When *Reader's Digest* abandoned the project, Hurt shopped around and found another publisher.) And in his graceful and diplomatic treatment of the lonely work of the critics, Hurt refrains from the poisonous backbiting that has so divided many of the best ones over the years.

One of the most intriguing chapters deals with Dallas police officer J.D. Tippit. Tippit was gunned down in a Dallas suburb hours after Kennedy was murdered. The Warren commission concluded Oswald did it. This act demonstrated to the world that the mild-mannered Oswald had a savage capacity for violence, coolly murdering first the president and then a police officer who accosted him later on a street. But the eyewitness and ballistic evidence linking Oswald to Tippit's murder was flimsy. After Jack Ruby murdered Oswald on national television on Nov. 24, 1963, the Tippit case was closed.

Hurt unearthed evidence that Tippit may have been gunned down for reasons more to do with soap opera than John Kennedy. Hurt reports Tippit may have been killed because he impregnated the wife of another man. To save Tippit's reputation, fellow Dallas police officers lied and tampered with evidence to implicate Oswald, who was a dead man anyway.

Officially, the justice department claims it has an ongoing inquiry into the Kennedy assassination as a result of a HSCA recommendation, but there's been not a peep from it in five years. Hurt recommends that in its stead an independent unit similar to the Nazi-hunting Office of Special Investigations be set up to pursue the investigation.

Writes Hurt: "... the political impact of Kennedy's death is why the question of his assassination is as important today as it was two decades ago.... If the atrocity was the result of a conspiracy, the country and its government even at this hour are subtly threatened by a cunning, invisible enemy as politically potent as the most menacing superpower.

"Moreover, the historical integrity of the whole country remains fractured until the questions are answered."

• *Brian McKenna, twice winner of an ACTRA award as best documentary writer in Canada, wrote and directed four CBC Fifth Estate documentaries on the Kennedy assassination.*

DTH 3-31-86

Romantic link added to Estes' LBJ story

By WILLIAM P. BARRETT
Staff writer

Two years ago this month, convicted swindler Billie Sol Estes told a startling tale to a grand jury in rural Robertson County.

The legendary conman claimed Lyndon B. Johnson, about to become vice president, had ordered the 1961 murder of U.S. Agriculture Department agent Henry H. Marshall. Estes said the future president was fearful Marshall, of Bryan, could link Johnson aide Clifton Carter — and thus Johnson — to Estes' fraudulent activities.

Testifying with immunity, Estes even named a hitman: Malcolm E. "Mac" Wallace, a former University of Texas at Austin student body president. Wallace had been convicted of murder with malice in the 1951 killing of Austin golf pro J. Doug Kinser.

After hearing Estes, the grand jury changed the official cause of the death of Marshall — who had been found with five bullet shots to the side — from suicide to homicide but said there was no one alive to indict.

Friends, relatives and associates of LBJ, Wallace and Carter — men who are all dead — immediately denounced Estes' testimony after it leaked to the media and was confirmed by officials. They particularly denied that the Johnson family had any kind of link with either Estes or Wallace.

Recently, however, for the first time a former LBJ assistant has publicly said Wallace once dated LBJ's younger sister, Josefa Johnson.

The aide, Horace Busby, said in an interview with the Times Herald that the pair "were having a relationship" around 1949 or 1950 in the Washington, D.C., area and that briefly "she may have moved in with him or he moved in with her." He said Josefa at the time was getting a divorce and had just been released from a Washington-area alcoholic rehabilitation center. Wallace was working as an economist for the Agriculture Department.

Billie Sol Estes

A 1964 book about LBJ by West Texas historian J. Evetts Haley suggested — without naming sources — that Wallace once had worked for LBJ, that Josefa Johnson had been dating Kinser, the Austin golf pro Wallace allegedly murdered on Oct. 22, 1951, and that LBJ somehow fixed the outcome of the resulting murder trial, perhaps to spare family embarrassment. Wallace, prosecuted by an LBJ ally who presented no proof about motive and defended by lawyers close to LBJ, was convicted of murder with malice but given only a suspended sentence.

Busby, though, denied the Kinser killing was the result of a romantic triangle involving Wallace, Josefa Johnson and Kinser or that LBJ rigged the trial.

"That case had nothing to do with Josefa or Lyndon Johnson," said Busby, who began working for Johnson's U.S. Senate office in 1948 and who now edits a political newsletter in Washington, D.C. "There is no story in that at all."

He said the Kinser killing took place after Wallace and Josefa Johnson stopped dating.

One of four siblings of LBJ, Josefa Johnson died Christmas Day 1961 at the age of 49 at her home in Fredericksburg near the LBJ ranch. Her death certificate says she died of a cerebral hemorrhage.

In a 1972 tape-recorded interview on file in Austin's LBJ Library, Robert J. "Bob" Long, the Travis County district attorney and LBJ ally who prosecuted Wallace without showing a motive, denied Josefa or LBJ was involved in the case. Without giving a time frame, he said that Kinser had tried to befriend Josefa hoping to get a federal small-business loan and that Josefa had rebuffed him.

Long, who died several years ago and whose comments are being reported now for the first time, said former Texas Ranger Clint Peoples, who investigated the Kinser killing and who could verify his account. However, in a recent interview Peoples, now the U.S. marshal in Dallas, said he had told Long that Josefa *was* involved. Peoples said that Wallace's estranged wife, Andre, now deceased, described during an interview what amounted to overlapping romantic triangles involving both women and both men.

One of the biggest mysteries in the Kinser killing is how the jury could convict Wallace of murder with malice, but recommend only a suspended sentence. In a recent Times Herald interview, juror D.L. Johnson, 68, a retired Highway Department employee, acknowledged he was the first cousin and good friend of lawyer Gus Lanier, who during the trial sat at the defense table of Wallace and his main lawyers.

D.L. Johnson, who is not related to LBJ, also said he alone among the jurors favored acquittal and that he forced the guilty-with-suspended-sentence verdict by threatening to cause a hung jury.

Since Estes testified in 1984, no conclusive evidence supporting or rebutting his account has emerged. Estes himself, 60, who lives in Abilene on federal probation, has declined to elaborate.

FWST 11-26-85

Walter Jenkins, aide to LBJ, dies

Associated Press

AUSTIN — Walter Wilson Jenkins, for 25 years a top aide to Lyndon Johnson, has died at 67.

Jenkins, who had been hospitalized since suffering a stroke in June, died Saturday. Services are scheduled for Tuesday in Austin.

"His relationship with Lyndon was a long, fond and dear one. I can't say enough about his loyalty and ability," said Johnson's widow, Lady Bird Johnson.

Jenkins, a native of Jolly, near Wichita Falls, joined the Johnson staff in 1939, when Johnson was a congressman.

When Johnson became president in 1963, Jenkins joined him as a White House assistant.

In 1964, Jenkins resigned in a furor that erupted after he was arrested at a YMCA two blocks from the White House on a morals charge. He later forfeited bond instead of appearing in court to fight the charge, an action that was not considered legally as an admission of guilt and did not result in a conviction.

Because of stress from the incident, Jenkins was hospitalized, and the official cause of his resignation was listed as "medical reasons," said Mike Gillette of the Lyndon B. Johnson Library in Austin.

Jenkins returned to Austin, becoming a management consultant.

Survivors include his wife; two daughters; four sons; and 12 grandchildren.

(Jenkins may have known of LBJ's Marshall involvement, but was apparently not questioned. Did JFK or intelligence personnel know, too? Is that why JFK was going to dump LBJ? And did CIA or others kill JFK to get the sympathetic Johnson in office? Barrett told me he is aware of this, and other, possibilities.)

Wade Tells Why 'Link' With Oswald Avoided

DALLAS, March 18 (AP)—District Attorney Henry Wade told Tuesday how prosecutors made the "big decision" of the Jack Ruby murder trial.

The decision: They would not call witnesses who swore they saw Ruby and Lee Harvey Oswald together before a sniper assassinated President Kennedy here.

Testimony from these witnesses would have made worldwide headlines. And, if jurors had believed the testimony, it would have provided a motive for the slaying of Oswald.

Ruby slipped into the heavily guarded city hall basement Nov. 24 and fired a single bullet into Oswald, who had been arrested two days earlier as the No. 1 suspect in the presidential assassination.

Wade said in an interview here that FBI agents and other investigators provided him with a list of witnesses who insisted they had seen Ruby and Oswald together at various times.

The district attorney said he decided not to call these witnesses because he had doubts about the accuracy of their statements.

"I knew that three of them had failed lie detector tests," Wade said.

"We knew testimony from these witnesses could have had a big impact on the jury, one way or another. But I felt then—and still do—that there has been no proof Ruby and Oswald knew each other. As things turned out, I'm really glad we didn't put the witnesses on the stand."

Jurors deliberated only two hours and 19 minutes before agreeing Ruby should die in the electric chair.

(A list of witnesses from the FBI, sworn testimony and lie detector tests - does anyone know of confirming documents on this astounding information?)

FWST 7-18-64

FWST 4-12-86 (edited)

Liz SMITH

RECENTLY ON *The Phil Donahue Show*, I experienced a similar dilemma in the on-going "let Marilyn Monroe rest in peace" attitude of many in the audience. I never did get time to explain that it doesn't matter who the star slept with in her short, tragic life.

But the crux of the Kennedy brothers' involvement with her still bears importantly on their characters, and thus on history itself. It isn't just prurient interest to pursue this.

Recent revelations in L.A. this very week by a cop who says he and fellow lawmen found evidence that Monroe had been murdered make this kind of question more relevant than ever. The Los Angeles district attorney continues to ignore such, even though there is ample suggestion that evidence and records were suppressed, tampered with and destroyed. By whom? Why?

Recalling Bay of Pigs as a guide to future covert wars

FWST 4-12-86

David Atlee PHILLIPS

Twenty-five years ago today the worst covert-action fiasco in American history occurred when a brigade of CIA-sponsored Cuban exiles landed at the Bay of Pigs.

The memory of that day haunts me because I was one of the CIA officers who planned the operation. But I recall more vividly and painfully April 19, 1961, when after two days we knew the defeat was beyond salvage. In Washington we listened to the final radio report from the Cuban commander on the beach. His invasion force of 1,400 Cuban exiles had been routed. He reported that he was standing in the shallows, and he was about to abandon his gear and head for the swamp.

Then he cursed the U.S. government, and he cursed us as individuals.

The question about the Bay of Pigs most frequently asked — particularly by those who were young or not even born at the time — is a simple one: Why did it fail?

There is no simple, single answer.

Some history should be set straight. It has often been argued that the root cause for the disaster was that the CIA promised President Eisenhower and, after his inauguration, President Kennedy that a spontaneous uprising would be sparked in Cuba by the landing at the Bay of Pigs. That has become a durable myth, but it is a myth.

The Bay of Pigs operational plan was based on the 1954 successful covert action, in which I was also involved, that led to the overthrow of the Arbenz government in Guatemala. No one in a responsible position ever contemplated a sudden victory in the Guatemalan endeavor. And it didn't occur until enough Guatemalans were convinced the invading army was well entrenched and the time had arrived to hop on the bandwagon.

Nor, in the Cuban operation did anyone from the lowest operator to Allen Dulles believe that immediate uprisings would topple the charismatic Fidel Castro.

Then why did it fail? For the first few years after the Bay of Pigs my observations were too subjective to be trusted. In 1975, however, I mustered as much objectivity as I could to list four principal reasons for the failure:

- First, the successful argument made to President Kennedy by his political advisers that the CIA's original plan to land at a small town called Trinidad near Cuban mountains would make the operation unacceptably "noisy"; thus the change to the isolated, swampy landing site at the Bay of Pigs.
- Next, the ambassador to the United Nations in New York, Adlai Stevenson, was not thoroughly informed of pre-invasion air strikes against Cuba — CIA sorties by exile pilots who claimed they were defecting from Castro's air force. Stevenson was understandably incensed after he denied charges by Cuba's foreign minister that the planes were on CIA-supported missions. His protest to Kennedy, who admired him, might have been critical in the decision to truncate the operation.
- Then, those of us within CIA — including Allen Dulles and Richard Bissell, the senior action officer of the operation — should have ignored the agency's "can do" and "good soldier" tradition and told the White House that an operation of the dimensions of the Bay of Pigs, if to be conducted at all, should be managed openly by the Pentagon and not by a secret army.
- Finally, the decision by President Kennedy to cancel at zero hour the air cover which the 1,400 Cuban exiles in the invasion amphibious force had been promised.

Now, after pondering the sad event for another decade, I must add a fifth element to the list of reasons the Bay of Pigs operation failed. There was a tacit assumption among those concerned with the operation in CIA — an assumption that hardened into certainty by D-day — that John Kennedy would bail out CIA if things went awry. Everyone, including Richard Bissell and Allen Dulles, believed deep down that Kennedy would rescue the operation with U.S. armed forces if need be.

There had to be some sort of overt military option ready in the wings if defeat loomed. (Surely, Eisenhower would have had one in reserve and used it.) But there was no contingency plan in fact or in Kennedy's mindset. Those involved in the project, from top to bottom, ignored an intelligence basic: Don't assume; know.

For those who demand a simple explanation of the Bay of Pigs debacle and for those who will not entertain the thesis that there was sufficient blame to share among everyone concerned, perhaps the curious incident of Fidel Castro's not making a speech should be recalled.

In a crowded press conference, one of the first American newsmen to visit Havana after the Bay of Pigs asked Castro, "Why did the Americans fail?" Everyone expected one of Castro's customary lengthy political diatribes. Instead, Castro shrugged and simply replied, "They had no air support."

Years after the event a man who had worked with me on the project explained what he had decided about the Bay of Pigs. "It was inevitable," he said. "The fiasco, I mean. The disaster. If it hadn't been the Bay of Pigs it would have been something else sometime in the future. In 1953 Kermit Roosevelt and a few fellows manipulated that crowd which toppled Mossadegh in Iran without any trouble at all. Then in 1954 we took care of Eisenhower's little problem in Guatemala. So easy, it seemed. All those successes just had to lead to a failure eventually, because the system kept calling on us for more and more even when it should have been obvious that secret shenanigans couldn't do what armies are supposed to do.

"If it hadn't been that time at the Bay of Pigs," he concluded, "it would have been somewhere at some other time."

We didn't call them that in 1961, but the exiles stranded on the beach at the Bay of Pigs were our contras. We should have scrapped the operation or, once committed, followed through with enough support that our contras would never have only one option: heading for the swamp.

David Atlee Phillips is the former chief of the CIA's Latin American and Caribbean operations. He is a native of Fort Worth.

BRIEFS....A new photoanalysis of the Dorman film shows the open-mic motorcycle during the shooting at the exact positions derived from the acoustics evidence; a full report, with blowups, next issue....More new photo evidence: the Weigman film frame just before the one in Coverups #23 also shows the puff of smoke on the knoll; since the camera angle is slightly different, that rule rules out a light reflection....Italian conspiracy documentary Two Kennedys, and an edited version of Rush To Judgment, have been officially released in home video form by MPI - details and possible review next issue....Dr. James "Red" Duke, public broadcasting host of a health and fitness series called Bodywatch, attended JFK at Parkland; anyone have documents on this newly discovered witness?....Thanks to Harry Livingstone for the Brian McKenna review....Moorman work continues!

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